

Monday, July 18, 2011

Hi Phil,

At the last Delta Stewardship Council meeting on June 23-24, direction was given to establish focus groups to discuss in more detail key issues related to the Delta Plan. I felt the discussion that occurred leading up to this direction was very helpful to the process. I very much appreciated the opportunity to consider these types of focus group discussions and wanted to express my thoughts on what I feel are the key areas.

I do not believe that there needs to be a focus group on every chapter of the draft Delta Plan. In fact, various versions of the draft Plan have been discussed for many months now, and there have been numerous comments from public interests. I feel the focus groups should narrow down to some "key issues" that will help determine how a Delta Plan can be finalized successfully.

However, from what I have heard in our meetings and from the various comments from key stakeholders, the following key issues deserve further consideration and a focused discussion: covered actions, the Delta as a unique place, incentive-based approaches, storage, flow criteria, habitat restoration, water supply reliability, strategic plan for levee investments, and the success of Plan.

I believe the latter issue (how to determine the success of the Plan), should be the first focus group meeting. It would also be important to invite representatives from environmental interests, Delta interests and the water user coalition. The focus group meetings should be organized as public meetings such that any other interests have an opportunity to attend. As with any process, the key to success is keeping focus and making sure that the right parties are included in the discussion. In fact, my own view is that the meetings could be held in the Delta Stewardship Council offices and would have the most chance of success if they were managed with an organized single-topic agenda.

This is a critical time in the development and finalization of the Plan, and therefore request that the focus group meetings be scheduled in the next several weeks. I suggest that several focus group meetings be scheduled on each day.

I look forward to these focus group meetings being scheduled and hearing thoughts and recommendations on how these key issues can better be addressed in the Delta Plan.

I want to commend Joe and his staff for their efforts in accomplishing the "huge task" of developing the Plan.

I also would like to commend you for your leadership, as our chair; and thank you for considering the merit of these proposed meetings and allowing further input into the development of the Plan.

Please call me if you have questions or would like to further discuss.

Thank you.

Gloria